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161 Considering India as a whole the Census Reports give the following
162 figures for the Kols :

Year	Total			
1881	57,420			
1891	143,551			
1901	105,474			
1911	148,245	(Including 23,819 'Animists')		
1921	328,245	Do.	9,944	Do.
1931	368,653	Do.	22,522	Do.[1]
1941	202,757	..	..	..

114 171 174 ORIGIN OF THE KOLS : GENERAL : HISTORICAL DATA. In recent years there has been an active interest in the study of the origin of tribe and race in India. There are still vast fields to be explored, since much mystery surrounds the movements of races in India. This is just as true of the Munda group to which the Kols belong. Mr. Sarat Chandra Roy in his book *The Mundas and Their Country* published in 1912, was one of the first to make a serious study of the traditions of the tribes of Chota Nagpur concerning their origins. He does not find that their oral traditions throw much light upon the name or location of their original home.

174 773 One of the legends collected by Roy suggests the place of origin as *Seva Sandi Bir*—'the vast desolate forest.' This vague terminology makes it difficult, if not impossible, to identify any specific locality. It may refer in general to the Highlands of Central India, or even to the dense jungle that is said to have covered parts of the Gangetic Valley. Roy also points out that the Cosmogonic legend of the Munda tribe names a place called *Ajabgarh*—a place first raised out of the primeval ocean, where Sing Bonga, the Supreme deity of the Munda group in Chota Nagpur, created the first parents of the Munda tribe. Roy holds that this idea was probably borrowed from the Hindus and then mixed up with some of the current Munda legends[2]. The Kols of Central India seem to know nothing, or have heard nothing, about Sing Bonga.

Sir William Crooke, in his article on the Kol tribe, gives us the following legendary information[3]. A certain King, Yayati, fifth King of the Lunar race, divided his empire among his five sons. According to the Harivansa, the children of Yayati's son Turuvasu settled in the south. The tenth generation (from, and including

1 *Ibid.*, 1:2, pp. 522, 523.
2 Roy, Sarat Chandra, *The Mundas and Their Country*, p. 12.
3 Crooke, W., *The Tribes and Castes of the North-Western Provinces and Oudh*, Vol. III, pp. 295, 296.

1:Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

Turuvasu), consisted of four brothers: Pandya, Korala, Chola and Kola. These divided the kingdom amongst themselves and the descendants of the last son, Kola, became the ancestors of the present Kols.

There is another legend recorded by Colonel Tickell[1] which tells of two self-existent primeval deities called Ote Boram and Sing Bonga. These deities created a boy and a girl and put them together in a cave expecting them to people the earth. However they were found to be too innocent to give hope of progeny and were therefore instructed by these deities in the art of making rice beer which inflames the passions. This was done, and in the course of time they had twelve sons and twelve daughters. These were divided into pairs in order to form the races to people the world. The choice was made on the basis of the kind of food they chose to eat. Sing Bonga set various kinds of food before them, with results which may be summarized thus:

1st	pair chose	bullock flesh and became	Kols.
2nd	"	buffalo "	Bhumiyas.
3rd	"	vegetables only "	Brahmins.
4th	"	Do. "	Chhatris.
5th & 6th	"	goat "	Sudras.
7th & 8th	"	fish "	Sudras.
9th		" shell fish "	Bhuiyas.
10th & 11th	"	pork "	Santhals.
12th		nothing "	Ghasis.

As the last pair had nothing the first pair was sorry for them and gave them some of their food and ever since they have been dependent on the Kols for food.

Crooke also records how the Kols of Mirzapur relate that they are emigrants from a place called Kiutali, in the territory of the then Bardi *Raja* in Rewa State. They name one Nanhu as their ancestor and had a tribal temple at Pipri near Chunar on the East Indian Railway, in which they installed Birmha *devi*. "Like many of the kindred tribes, they have legends of a kingdom in the Gangetic valley, whence they were expelled by the Savaras and returned to the hill country of the south."[2]

Russell and Hiralal in *Tribes and Castes of the Central Provinces* have nothing to add to Crooke's account in connection with traditions of origin. Apparently they did not put much emphasis on this subject.

1 *Ibid.*, p. 296.
2 Crooke, W., *Op. Cit.*, p. 296.

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114 564 [614] same as Borowar on our list; Bin and Binj are probably the same, and Harwariya may have become Garhvariya; the ploughman becoming the fortress-dweller.

Russell and Hiralal[1] state that they found the subcastes noted below, but their results appear to be based on materials gathered from the eastern edge of the Central Provinces. It will be noted that there are points of agreement and disagreement between their list and ours: [614] Rautia, Rautele, Thakuriya, Kagwaria, Desaha, Bharia, Savar and Khairwar. They also include as "totemistic septs" the following: Bargaiyan, Kathotia, Katharia, Kumhra and Bhuwar.

564 1. *Rautiya.* This designation is believed to be derived from the word Rawat meaning "a prince," and as such may be traced to some ancient landholding or warrior group among the Kols in centuries [554] past. This group claims to be the highest of the Kol *kurhis* and such assertions were usually not disputed by either Thakuriyas or others in joint group discussions; although on one or two occasions it was controverted as recorded under the Thakuriya (*vide p.* 41). Almost [177] without exception the Rautiyas make use of the Brahmin priest at the [585] time of wedding, and of the Hindu *nai* or barber, and the *dhobi* or [302] washerman in certain ceremonies connected with birth and death. Not to do this would be to sin against social conventions; yet in one or two cases we were told that if a Rautiya is too poor to employ a Brahmin he might make other arrangements. This probably means that far back in their history they attended to such matters themselves, but have now become Hinduized and feel unable to act for themselves. Rautiyas made the claim that they move freely among Hindus and are recognized by them in a manner that other Kol *kurhis* are not. While the group is theoretically endogamous, hypergamy is occasionally practised with the Thakuriyas. This is probably a relic from the time when intermarriage was common, but the process of Hinduization has [589] now stabilized the *kurhis*. They admit that if necessary Thakuriya girls may be married to Rautiya boys, but deny that they ever give their girls in marriages to Thakuriyas. If a *swasaha* Rautiya—those [184] whom perform marriage without the help of a Brahmin—has an eligible [585] son they would give their daughter to him in marriage only if it is agreed that the Brahmin priest and the *nai*, will officiate in the regular way.

Rautiyas have a very definite taboo in the case of the horse. [825] Horse manure is absolutely forbidden to be touched. There are several [773] curious stories that came to our attention. One of them is that in the [784] dim ages past Bhagawan gave the Kols the gift of a horse. In a few

1 Russell and Hiralal, *Op. Cit.*, Vol. III, Article Kol.

1:Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

days it grew to be so tall that no Kol could mount it. They did not know what to do, and the only thing that they could think of (being jungle people) was to take an axe and shorten its legs. This they were about to do when the horse disappeared. A variant story of the above is that the horse given by Bhagawan had a peculiar power which made it impossible for Kols to ride upon it. At one moment it would be so small that it would run right out from under the man who was riding it, leaving him standing in the way ; on other occasions it became so tall that no one could climb upon it. Once, when it was in the latter form, a Kol in desperation took his axe and started to cut short the legs of the horse, but before he could actually do this it was snatched away by Bhagawan. Since then Kols have never used horses, for they were "deceived" by Bhagawan. They claim that they will never touch the dung of the horse, "not even if we are beaten." They have no taboos in the case of cow dung.

The Bharias, a tribe of cultivators, probably Mundas, found mostly in Jubbulpore district have a similar story which is recorded by Russell and Hiralal as follows :

> They have an aversion for the horse and will not remove its dung. To account for this they tell a story to the effect that in the beginning God gave them a horse to ride and fight upon. But they did not know how to mount the horse because it was so high. The wisest man among them proposed to cut notches in the side of the animal by which they could climb up, and this they did. But God, when he saw it, was very angry with them, and ordered that they should never be soldiers, but should be given a winnowing fan and broom to sweep the grain out of the grass and make their livelihood in that way.[1]

Some Rautiyas also have a taboo against the use of mattresses or quilts made from pieces of old clothes. They also seem to have a very definite taboo against the use of gold as an ornament, although it was often stated that this custom is passing away. It is not that they cannot *touch* gold, for this they may do, but they should not wear it on their persons. The reason for this goes back to Sheori the mother of Kols who would never touch gold. They now consider that this was probably a mistake on her part and that Bhagawan does not mean that Kols should avoid its use. This taboo is not observed by most of this Rautiya women, who use gold if they can afford it.

In the course of our investigations it became apparent that other

1 Russell and Hiralal, *Op. Cit.*, Vol. II, p. 250.

1;Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

564 sub-groups are recognised within the Rautiya *kurhi*. These are often listed as entirely separate from Rautiyas, but when those conversant with such matters were pressed, it was found that these are really sub-groups of the Rautiya. The sub-groups are:

1a. *Rautel*. This group appears in eleven of the twenty-one lists as a genuine Kol *kurhi*. Further study has revealed that this name is used rather loosely and that there is really very little difference between the Rautels and the Rautiyas. In Maihar State groups calling themselves Rautel claimed that they practise hypergamy with Rautiyas and Thakuriyas; but this occurs only if suitable Rautel girls are not available for marriage. The groups in Maihar State claimed that they are the highest class of Kols, as a Brahmin priest always officiates in their wedding ceremonies, while the Rautiyas do not always observe this essential. It came out in the same discussions that Rautels eat off an earthen dish known as the *kurha*, and that they are thus probably identical with the sub-group of Rautiyas known as Kurhas. A Kathautiya Kol later confirmed this interpretation. This same informant said that his group used to practise hypergamy with Kurhas, but that now there are no restrictions, and in most places either can take or give their girls in marriage without hindrance. This opinion, however, was found to be inconsistent with enquiries in other centres.

[264 415] [114]

1b. *Kurha*. The Kurha is definitely a Rautiya of a particular kind, and might be considered a "totemistic sept". This group is expected to do all its eating off black earthenware vessels known as *kurhas*. These are not made by Kols themselves, but are bought from members of the potter caste, the Kumhars. The following stories were noted in regard to their origin.

[614]

The earthenware Kūṛai
This is the dish from which the Kōṛais should eat.

Fig. 17

[415 264]

564 713 Once upon a time there were two brothers who were orphaned of their father and brought up by their mother. After a time the old mother died and the two sons were forced to go out into the world and earn their own living. Following quite a long period of separation they happened to meet, and each enquired after the work and welfare of the other. The younger related how he was working for a certain master and how this master had fed him from a *kurha* made by a Kumhar. Then after becoming independent of his master he told how he had continued to use that type of dish. The elder brother was much annoyed at this and told his younger brother that they could no longer associate nor eat together because of this practice.

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This led to a separation between the brothers and they formed two divisions of the same family. The elder brother was the head of the family of Rautiya Kols and the younger of the Kurha Kols. 564 773

Another story relates that there were once five brothers of the same *kurhi*. Due to lack of food they were forced to separate : one went to the Binj mountains and founded the Binj *kurhi* ; another went to a Thakuriya house, found shelter there, and from him are descended the Thakuriya Kols ; another who took refuge with the Kumhars, the potters, was the ancestor of the Kurha sept. It is not unlikely that these stories contain the truth that this *kurhi* may have arisen from some marriage with Kumhars or perhaps miscegenation with them, or it may have reference to some occupational adventure on the part of some Kols.

Apparently the use of an earthen vessel by one sub-group does not prevent marriage within the whole group, nor does it limit it to that group, for marriages are possible between them and the Kathautiya Rautiyas who use wooden vessels from which to eat. There is the restriction, though, that Kurhas and Kathautiyas should not eat together unless they are related by marriage, and when this is the case they may compromise by the use of the ordinary brass plate. In a certain centre we were told that the only "pure Rautiyas" were those who used the *kurha* and that there were also definite marriage restrictions between them and the users of the wooden bowl. This, if ever true, is disappearing. 564 [264]

1c. *Kathautiya*. Evidence goes to show that this *kurhi* is also a sub-group of the Rautiyas and differs from the Kurhas in that its members eat from a wooden bowl, called *kathauta* or *kathota*. The women folk, and occasionally the men, wear bits of wood in the lobes of their ears. During childhood the hole in the lobe is enlarged by the insertion of fibres from weeds, and from time to time a new bit is inserted in the attempt to enlarge the hole. We did not find that the Kathautiya Kols were consistent in the use of the wooden dish. At Sihora they told us that while they were Kathautiyas they had nevertheless given up the use of the *kathauta* and had adopted the ordinary brass plate. In other centres, notably one near Katni, they still use the bowl and cling to the custom tenaciously. As far as possible, they declared, all food should be prepared in wooden vessels, and it is expected that they should eat their food from such vessels. They do not manufacture their own *kathautas*, nor is any particular kind of wood used, but the dishes are made by Hindu carpenters from such wood as is available. At the time of death or eclipse of sun or moon the Kurha Kols must throw out all their earthenware dishes ; the [415 264] [304 301] [178] [184] [252] [439] [821 768 415]

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564 Kathautiyas also throw out their earthenware vessels, but not the wooden ones which are considered to be unaffected by these occurrences. This may be due to Hindu influences.

It was intimated that hypergamy is occasionally practised with the Thakuriyas but in such cases it appears that the girls are "kept" rather than "married". One group of Kathautiyas asserted their superiority over the Thakuriyas and claimed that if a Thakuriya girl came to live with a Kathautiya boy, the Thakuriyas could take her back; but that they would never take back one of their girls who went to live with the Thakuriyas.

Some Kols stated that Binj, Kathariya and Kulmangans are types of Rautiya Kols, but the best evidence appears to be otherwise and these groups are treated separately below.

The use of the word "Rautiya" is not confined to the Kols. There is a Munda tribe in Chota Nagpur called Rautiyas and a few members of this tribe are found in the Jashpur State of the Central Provinces. It is also the name of a subcaste of Dahait, a mixed caste of village watchmen of the Jubbulpore and Mandla districts, and several of their subcaste names bear a close resemblance to those of the Kols. It is also a sub-caste of the Kawars and of a section of the Chamars and Rawats (Ahir).[1] The other subgroups of Rautiyas as noted above were not in use elsewhere except that among the Darzis, or tailors there is a Kathautiya subdivision.[2]

2. *Thakuriyas.* Russell and Hiralal[3] are of the opinion that this word is derived from *thakur* meaning "a lord", and they trace this *kurhi* to the intermarriage of Rajput males with Kol females. Such intermarriage probably followed the gradual penetration of the Rajputs into the regions occupied by the Kols. The stories given below concerning the origin of the Thakuriyas probably reflect a long period in which there was a considerable mixture of blood.

According to one story a certain Rautiya Kol had two wives who often quarrelled and the husband saw fit to scold the elder of the two. As a result she left the protection of the Kol and in anger went to the house of the *malguzar* of the village who happened to be a Thakur. She began to live on the veranda of his house, and earned her food with her own hands in any way she could. After some months she gave birth to a son and the Thakur sent word to this effect to her husband, with the request that he should come and take the mother and child

1 Russell and Hiralal, *Op. Cit.*, Vol. I, p. 402.
2 *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 376.
3 *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 509.

1;Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

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back to his home. When the Kol received the news he denied that the son was his and claimed that the Thakur was the real father. In the end the Thakur kept the child and when he grew up the boy was married, and his descendants make up the Thakuriya Kols.

Another story is that there were once two sisters Shivari and Sudama. Shivari was the elder. Sudama entered the house of a Thakur and conceived a child by him and her descendants are called the Thakuriyas. Shivari's children became the Rautiyas.

There is also a much longer story current which involves a battle with the Ahirs.[1] Once there lived at Pipari, south of the Ganges river near the river Belam, an old Kol named Makhara Dudjh. He had a very beautiful wife named Chandwa. They had five daughters, four of whom were married without difficulty. Many Ahirs lived some distance from the Kols in a village called Gaura, and the two groups were on good terms and often ate together. This gave the opportunity to an Ahir named Loharik to elope with Chandwa. The Kols were much angered at this breach of hospitality and a group of three hundred and sixty of them armed with guns, swords and spears set out after the Ahirs and defeated them, but could not locate Chandwa. In the course of time Loharik Ahir and Chandwa Kol had a son called Bhorik. After a few years Loharik remarked to his brother Samar that the Kols were getting too powerful and should be destroyed, and that they had better play a trick and thus eliminate them. A marriage was arranged between Bhorik and an Ahir girl and the Kols were invited. The Ahirs had five or six great jars of liquor ready for the wedding feast. The three hundred and sixty Kols came with all their arms to the village of Gaura. Loharik Ahir stood before Makhara Dudjh with folded hands and respectfully asked him to have all the implements of warfare put into a room and locked so that at the time of drinking no incidents might occur. The Kols foolishly trusted him and their weapons were locked away. The Ahirs had been warned not to take a second drink, but rather to feign drunkenness after the first drink. Before long the Kols were too drunk to fight and the Ahirs quickly killed all of them.

Now Makhara Dudjh had a younger brother named Devasi who was blind and hence had to live by begging. His sister cared for him

1 In the *Census of India*, 1931 1:2 p. 3 84, it is related that "The Abhirss, from whom the modern Ahirs are said to have descended were a widespread people.... The Abhirss were in the North-west Frontier Provinces before the Christian era. In the third century A.D. they were in lower Sind and North Gujarat and next they appear to have passed down the Tapti valley into Khandesh." Possibly these Kol stories go back to 250 A.D. and to the struggles with the Abhirss for the possession of the land. Later material is mixed up, as the Thakuriyas are also brought into the story.

[174]

1;Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

564 773 and led him wherever he went. He always had a bow and some arrows with him, as he was also a mighty shooter. As they were out begging they met a Brahmin female beggar who had just been to Gaura, the Ahir village, and had learned of the slaughter of the Kols. When the blind Devasi heard of this he said to his sister: "Sister, why should we live any longer when all our friends are dead? Let us now go to Gaura village and as we approach it tell me carefully where the two Ahir leaders are sitting so that I may shoot them." When they were within a mile of the village she spied them standing before the village and ready to give battle. The two halted and the sister carefully observed all that was going on. At last the two brothers turned their faces toward the blind archer and his sister. She told him that all was ready and handed him two arrows and then set his face toward the brothers. His aim was so exact that he shot the arrows right into the eyes of the two brothers and both fell down dead. Devasi's strength was so great that the bow almost broke when it was bent. The Ahirs were astounded at this mighty feat and wondered who did this. In their estimation Devasi was a mighty Kol and in terror they deserted the village. The blind Kol and his sister then took possession of the village and drove the 360 head of cattle therein back to their own village. They found some children whom they brought along, and when they grew up they intermarried with the Kols and the offspring of this union were called Thakuriyas.

The last part of the story does not seem to fit into the tale as a whole and the Ahir story may refer to some event other than that of the formation of the Thakuriyas. There is a section of the Ahirs called Thakurs and there may be some connection at this point. Russell and Hiralal also cite the belief that the Abhiras, the ancestors in part of the modern Ahirs, came into India from Central Asia about the time of Christ.[1] To-day they are a much mixed race.

564 734 184 It was ascertained that the Thakuriyas do not have the Rautiya taboo against the horse; that they can make mattresses and can even sit on those made by Kathariyas, and that they have no feeling against the use of gold as ornaments. In fact it is believed that a Thakuriya cannot carry out a wedding without the use of gold and that the parents of the bride should at least see some gold about the bridegroom's neck. If the bride can also wear it, so much the better.

564 262 One informant said that Thakuriya men occasionally eat chicken and pork, but that their women-folk never eat them. They do not object to eating with other *kurhis*, and while they cannot take Rautiya girls in marriage, they can marry their daughters to them.

1 *Ibid*, Vol. II, p. 10.

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When a number of Thakuriyas were asked which *kurhi* is the highest they responded as follows : "Judge for yourselves, the Rautiyas both eat and keep chickens and pigs, but we never touch them. Should a pig stray into one of our houses we have to clean and purify everything and also ourselves. We may eat pork, but always *outside* of our houses and before we can enter them again we must bathe. Our women never eat such meat. So judge for yourselves which is the better group."

3. *Binj*. This name is derived from the Binj hills, the modern Vindhyan range which cuts across the Indian peninsula. At Sihora we were assured that Rautiya and Binj were identical, but apart from this dissenting view this division was generally accepted as a separate *kurhi*. The Binj were usually said to be the highest of all the Kol groups yet no one that we interviewed had actually seen a Binj Kol. They had heard that there was a Binj *Raja* in Rajputana to the north-west, but where he lived now they did not know. They may be related to a Binjhwar tribe in the Central Provinces called "a comparatively civilized Dravidian tribe, or caste formed from a tribe."[1] It is now established that they are one of the subdivisions of the Baigas.[2] They also trace their ancestry back to the Vindhya hills.

The following account was given to us of the Binj Kols : A Thakur or Rajput, fell in love with a Kol woman and the couple ran away together and sought refuge in the Binj mountains. A son was born to them who was named "Binj" after the mountains ; this boy stayed in the hills and was the forefather of the Binj *kurhi*. Other children born to the couple returned with their parents to their old home and gave rise to the Thakuriyas. The Binjes and the Thakuriyas are thus closely linked.

Another story is that a Kol woman became pregnant and gave birth to a son far away in the jungles. Being unable to care for the child she was forced to leave it there. Before long a tiger came across the hapless infant and took it to his den and looked after it. The child grew and lived in the jungle with the tiger and was called Binjhwar. The lad was very intelligent and proved to be a fine hunter and brought the tiger his daily food. When he was old enough to be married the tiger decided that he ought to find the boy a wife, but he was unable to decide how to manage it. One day by chance a Raja's wedding party accompanying the bride-to-be was passing through that very jungle. The tiger saw his chance and frightened the men

1 *Ibid.*, Vol. ii, p. 329.
2 Elwin, V., *The Baigas*, p. 5 ff.

1;Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

564 so badly that they dropped the *palki* in which the girl was being carried,
773 and ran away as fast as they could. The poor girl was at the mercy of the tiger, who brought her to the boy, and gave her to him to be his wife. The tiger then released the boy from his forest life and together the new couple left the jungle and went to Sheori who was the boy's relative, as his mother belonged to Sheori's family. The offspring of this couple became the Binj Kols.

These two stories do not even make the same point but both probably preserve certain traditions: one of a connection with the Binj mountains and the other of some inter-marriage with jungle Baigas or Binjhwars.

564 4. *Khangar.* There is a distinct group of village watchmen and
[554] field labourers of low caste called by this name and found mostly in northern central India and in the United Provinces. The name is said to be derived from the words *khanā*, a pit, and *gar*, a maker or digger; because the Khangar digs holes in other peoples' houses for the purpose of theft. According to another account the name is derived from *khadgahar* meaning a Kshatriya or warrior, who earns his livelihood by means of a *khadga*, or sword.

[177 With regard to Kol Khangars we were told that they were
793 *swasahas*, not making use of Brahmins or other Hindus in social
554 events, such as marriage. They are considered low on the social
583 scale and Rautiyas always avoid them. If a Rautiya girl elopes with
85] a Khangar she can never be received back, and the offspring are
171 Khangars. In Chota Nagpur there is a Khangar tribe which is a branch of the Munda group. The following story is told of their origin:

> Two Munda brothers were travelling with their wives from one place to another. One of the brothers and his wife preceded the other brother in the country. On the way, the former brother's wife was brought to bed of a child. While leaving the place the Munda couple buried the placenta etc., in the hearth which they had improvised at their temporary lodging. Soon afterwards, the other brother came up there with his wife. On opening up the hearth he discovered the placenta etc., buried there and thought that his brother had bagged some game and left a portion of the meat for him to cook and eat. And so the couple unsuspectingly ate the unclean meat. When the brothers met, and the truth was known, the brother who had eaten the unclean meat was excommunicated and his descendants became Khangars.[1]

1 Roy, S. C., *The Mundas and Their Country*, p. 401.

1:Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

776 *Buri devi.* "Bad Goddess." Sometimes this is made a male and called Bura Deo. It is probable that this is connected with the 782 chief Gond deity, Buradeo. This deity is not widely worshipped among the Kols, but should a sacrifice be necessary she prefers a female kid of reddish colour.

Chandika. This deity is said to have one body and two mouths, one in the front and the other in the back, and is a form of Kali.

Chithra devi. Goddess of torn clothes. This deity is worshipped in connection with the new moon, when a piece of torn cloth should be offered her, good clothes held up, or some cloth tied to a Tamarind tree. In this manner she helps one to get new clothes.[1]

Dhartimai. The goddess of the earth. Worship and ceremonies [241 in connection with this deity are observed at the time of ploughing 184] and threshing, but only by the agricultural Kols. A *hom* offering is all that is usually given her. Probably she is related more closely to the Hindu pantheon than are those requiring a bloody offering.

Jalni. Some Kols claim that Jalni is the Creator of the universe. ● [773] This may refer to Jalpati, the Hindu deity presiding over water. The Kols have the legend that before there was an earth all was water. Jalni, however, is not much worshipped by Kols.

Jogni devi. Frequently called Jognimai, is a goddess who [778] particularly cares for children. The picture shows a shrine outside the home.[2] The pole above has black bangles and drops of *ghi* may be observed at the base. When children are ill, or in danger, or affected by the power of evil spirits, Jognimai should be propitiated. [751] At the time of a smallpox epidemic, one of the parents offers her a cocoanut and pours water over her shrine, in order that she may not allow the smallpox to attack the children.

[496] A Kol who worked on the railway claimed that it was Jognimai that caused the locomotives to run. He would often make an offering to her just before the locomotive started.

Kalimai. Kalimai is very popular among all the lower classes, and the Kols have also accepted her. While they do not give her the chief place, which is usually given to Shardamai, yet she is said to be one of the six sisters of Shardamai. It is not customary for Kols to [778] have a shrine to her alone. When she is worshipped, it is at the village shrine along with the other deities such as Khermai, more generally [822] worshipped by Kols of the village. Her colour is black, and black in a flag over a shrine indicates that she may be worshipped there. She should be offered darkish-coloured cocoanuts, or if animal sacrifices

1 See page 131.
2 See plate xxi.

1:Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

776 825 773 According to Kol legends tigers and Kols have been closely associated. This may refer to the jungle habitation of early Kols or it may have a totemistic aspect. Descent from the totem may be implied in the legend recorded on pages 41-42. But now the tiger and the Kol have separated and gone their own ways, this being symbolic of changes in the Kol way of living. The tiger is reverenced because he is feared. While Kols claim that they should never hunt the tiger nor assist in a beat, nevertheless this principle is often broken due to the temptation of money. This attitude may have a totemistic origin, but it also may be due to the fear that he will return evil for evil.

776 782 825 The tiger should be propitiated along with the household gods, but as a rule he is not included in them by people who live in areas where tigers are not to be expected. It is the Kol that lives in or near the jungle who fears the tiger. Baghdeo is offered a cocoanut, *chapatis* and other food. At the *Holi* season he should be given a chicken. The opinion is advanced that if this is overlooked Baghdeo may attack, kill, and eat male members of the family not sacrificing to him. It is claimed by these folks that he will never attack a woman or a girl. If he is pleased they may go into the mountains and jungle in search of wood and grass without fear of him. If he is met, he will pass them by, and should be respectfully spoken to. A Kol need not fear a tiger unless he has neglected his offerings to Baghdeo.

776 842 782 *Bahanar Singh Deo* is another of the Kol household gods and has the power to close the womb of the women folk and cause barrenness. In one centre it was said that women who desired children should come before him and sacrifice to him in preference to Shardamai. If Bahanar Singh should fail, then Shardamai may be tried. This *deo* is particularly fond of white offerings, and a white kid or chicken is preferred. This should be offered at the village shrine. At the time of offering the woman desiring children comes before the shrine with a pot of oil and *haldi*, into which she dips her right hand and somewhere about the shrine makes an impression of the whole of her hand. This attracts Bahanar Singh and helps him to identify the woman. The *panda* is there and cuts the animal, sprinkles the blood, and tells her what to do in order that her prayer may be granted. He may advise certain other offerings, and perhaps command that she abstain from certain foods, particularly rich ones, for a season.

776 782 824 *Barum baba*. Barum *baba* is quite often thought of as an evil spirit. In the Kaimur hills it is said that he always lives in *pipal* trees. No image or sign of his presence is made. The offerings are simply placed at the foot of the tree which he inhabits, and cocoanuts and *khichri* were mentioned as offerings. It was also asserted that he likes to have the sacred

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778 was washed as well. The *puris* were then put right beside the shrine
796 in piles and the cocoanuts in front. The two flags carried by the
755 boy were set up along with others which had accumulated at the shrine, the larger by Khermai and the smaller one by Asmanimai. Two or three of the cocoanuts were then broken and laid before the *devis*.

Another procession now started, this time around the shrine of Khermai only. It too went in a clockwise direction, not around the platform as a whole, but on the platform and around the *devi*. This time three rounds were made. The woman with the dishevelled hair and her husband both measured their lengths in this procession, but the others did not do so, they simply walked around. The group then gathered again in front of Khermai and the woman once more prostrated herself, although not as vigorously as before. In the meantime the drummer came down and sat beside a small hedge near the shrine. His wife spread out a piece of cloth in front of him, and the villagers proceeded to pour out their offerings of rice, wheat, *dal* and the like onto the cloth. It was said that this went to the drummer. At the same time individual members of the group on the platform were breaking the remaining cocoanuts into small pieces. These were distributed to everyone within sight. The *puris* were not distributed; that would be done later on.

The accompanying diagram shows the arrangement of this shrine and gives an idea of what was done. See figure 27 and plate XXV.

778 *Offerings at the Shrines.* Considerable mention has been made
782 of the offerings presented at Kol shrines, but more should be added and the matter summarized.

The general tendency is toward offerings of cocoanuts and food rather than animals. This is partly due to economic reasons, but may also be due to the influence of the Vaishnavite sect of Hinduism.

The most common single offering is the *hom*, which is essentially a fire sacrifice. This must have been borrowed from the Hindus. Into the fire burning before the deity is dropped *ghi* and incense. Sometimes pieces of cocoanut, or seeds and drops of lime juice are added.

The cocoanut is universally offered, and it has been suggested
[834] that it is symbolic of human sacrifice and that the shell represents the human skull. As a rule Kols seem to have no knowledge of this point
[773] of view. At the temple of Shardamai and Maihar, the Brahmin priest told us the cocoanuts were symbolical of the head of a certain Alhandal who used to bathe Shardamai daily with water and finally sacrificed his own head to her. She was so pleased at this that she gave him the gift of immortality. According to Crooke, Alha and Udal were

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two Banaphar Rajput heroes engaged in a war between two Rajput clans. This was dated about 1165-1203 A.D.[1]

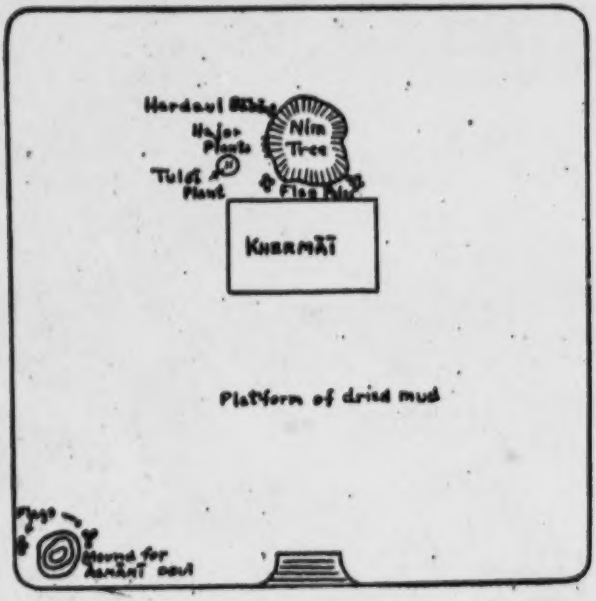

Fig. 27

Usually the cocoanut is first laid whole before the deity, and after the ceremonies have been performed and any invocations offered by the *panda*, the cocoanut is broken by hitting it on the ground or on a stone. It is always struck on the stone; not broken by being hit by a stone or other instrument. The shell is thrown aside and the edible portion placed before the deity. Pieces are distributed to each of the worshippers and onlookers, who then eat before her. A priest may break a cocoanut in the absence of the offerer, if the latter is not able to be present.

Lemons or limes are also offered. These please and attract the *devis*. They are also liked by demons and may attract them. Should

1 *Ibid.*, p. 288.

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walk from one end to the other. In the evening the big meal is enjoyed by all alike.

Khichri or *Khichhrihai* is a simple festival, apparently one of fellowship when one should invite some friend to a meal and eat rice and *dal* which was boiled together. It comes several times a year.[1]

Marpak is a festival in memory of the dead. It has its Hindu influences and only the male members of the family go to a river where there is a Hindu *nai* and priest. The *nai* shaves their heads and beards and they go to the *ghat* to bathe. After this they visit the Brahmin who is sitting by the edge of the water. A few annas are given to him and holding up some water cupped in his hands, he mutters the name of the dead and recites some sacred texts. For the next few days whenever taking a bath or washing clothes, the Kol should do likewise and offer water in the name of his deceased. A leaf plate is put out either on the roof of the house or in a niche in the wall in front of the veranda. See plate xx. In this foods such as *puris*, *bhat*, *dal* and *bara* are put.

Nagpanchami. This is the worship of the serpent as symbolized particularly by the Cobra or *Nag*. This festival occurs on the fifth day of *Sawan* (July-August). Its institution is aptly described by Underhill :[2]

"This day celebrates the return of Krishna from the Yamuna after having overcome the big river snake Kaliya. Krishna had fallen into the river from a tree overhanging the bank, into which he had climbed to fetch a ball which had lodged there while he was playing with the herds people. His return with the snake was received with joy, the herdsmen offering Kaliya milk in gratitude for his not having harmed their favourite, Krishna.....

Another legend says that a man, ignorant of the festival, while ploughing on this day killed a nest of young snakes. The mother snake, in revenge, in the night bit the man and all his family, except one married daughter living in another village. Having killed all but this daughter, the mother snake set out for that village to kill her also. But the girl, knowing of the festival, had put out a dish of appetising food, which the snake tasted, and which gratified her so much that she not only refrained from killing the girl, but gave her a healing lotion to sprinkle on the bodies of the parents and other children, whereby they were all restored to life. After this, the festival became general."

1. Elwin also finds this festival among the Baigas and thinks they took it from the Gonds. He calls it a children's festival. The children beg rice and cook it by the riverside. *The Baigas*, p. 82.
2. Underhill, M. M., *The Hindu Religious Year*, p. 122.

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796 825 [574] Kols everywhere observe this festival. On the fourth day of *Sawan* or *Srawan* they should observe a fast which ends with a feast on the fifth day. On the morning of the fifth day Kols worship some symbol of *Nag* and put out saucers of milk near termite hills and other places where snakes have been seen or suspected. No digging or ploughing is done this day lest the snakes be disturbed or injured. Sometimes the women do no grinding or cutting. In the evening there is a big feast of "*puris, sewai, bara,* milk and sugar."

796 [776] *Naodurgan.* Literally, "Nine Durgas." This refers to the *Jawara* festival noted above, and is especially connected with the one observed in the fall. Kols say it is observed in remembrance of the nine *devis.* Durga *devi* is the eldest and eight more accompany her. Hindus usually speak of this as *Naoratri* or Nine Nights.

Phag. This is the same as the *Holi* festival, which we have described.

[574] *Pusan.* In Rewa it was said that this was held in the month of *Pus* (December-January). This may be a variation of the so called *Khichri* festival, for at this time Kols say they worship no particular *devi,* but have a feast with some friends.

796 789 [164] *Rakhi.* "Protector." The full title of this festival is *Rakhibandhana,* "amulet tying." This ceremony is performed in the month of *Sawan* (July-August). This is probably the most unhealthful season of the year in the villages, a time when malaria is very common, and something must be done to ward off illness. A coloured cord decorated with tinsel is tied to the wrist; husbands should tie one on the wrists of the wife and the wife on the husband, sisters on the wrists of brothers and *vice versa.*

[177 773] This festival is based upon the Hindu legend from the *Bhavishyottara Purana* in which the story is told of the earth, men and gods being under the power and tyranny of the great King Bali, who, by his devotion to Siva, had gained enough merit and power to rule. Before Vishnu became incarnated as the Dwarf Vamana and subsequently conquered him, it was necessary to have some kind of protection from this demon. Vishnu gave Indrani, the wife of Indra, a coloured silken thread which was tied by her about Indra's wrists, and thus he secured protection from Bali.

796 177 *Ramnavami* is the birthday of Rama and comes on the ninth day of the month of *Chaita* (March-April). This coincides with the ninth day of the spring *Jawara* festival, and is the Hinduised term a Kol may use to describe the doings that night. See under *Jawara.*

796 789 184 *Sirwani.* This is another name for the *Rakhi* festival. *Sirwani*

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513 823 Kols generally say that they, unlike the Hindus, are not particular about the direction of their head when they sleep. Inside their own houses they can make their couch in any direction. When they sleep outside, however, they should lie with their heads to the east. And yet, further questionings have revealed, that most Kols have a definite prejudice against sleeping with the head to the north, whether inside or outside the house. No doubt this is because the [764] dead are placed in that position.

231 825 [673 681] ANIMALS AND TREES. *Animals.* Among the Kols there is an exaggerated respect for the cow and it is said that she is the most sacred of all animals. To kill a cow is to commit a great sin, much worse even than killing a Brahmin. In the strictest sense it is murder, and anyone killing a cow even accidentally should make a pilgrimage [627 574] to the Ganges and offer a gift to the river. On his return he is required to give a feast to the community. Kols as a rule are not rich in cattle and those they possess are a poor lot.

825 The palm squirrel (*Sciurus palmarum*), is very commonly found in the villages and frequents the houses of people. Kols have a great respect for this creature and some would even rank it above the cow, for, one said, to kill such an animal was as bad as killing a hundred [773] Brahmins! Popular legend has it that when Rama was building his bridge from India to Ceylon in order to rescue Sita, these squirrels helped him by bringing dust on their tails. Rama was pleased with this act of devotion and stroked the backs of the squirrels and to this [627 574] day the marks of his hands can be seen in the black strips on their backs. Any one who happens to kill a squirrel should give a feast. Boys will never shoot nor molest them.

231 825 [183] The cat is likewise revered by Kols and is usually called *mai*, mother. In the ordinary sense Kols do not keep nor care for cats; they are just a part of the village and roam it freely in search of food while no one claims particular ownership. Sometimes they multiply to an alarming extent and in one village it was discovered that no chickens could be raised due to the presence of the cats who killed and ate the younger chickens. No effort was made to change this condition nor rid the village of the cats. That would be a breach of custom.

[783] The dogs too are the general property of the village. To Indian villagers the dog is often an impure animal, but this is not true in the case of the Kols, for the touch of the dog is not defiling. He is a village watchman, and in a sense a custodian of their safety, as he gives the village warning should strangers approach. To slay him is to slay

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[23] [825]

one's bodyguard. On the whole the dogs of an Indian village are a miserable lot and are a menace to the health of the people.

The tiger is another animal reverenced by Indian peasants and is very prominent in their folk belief, especially in areas where tigers roam. This is also shared by the Kols and as a jungle people they reverence him. A Kol should never take part in a beat to track down a tiger. If one should be met in the forest he should be addressed very respectfully. [789] Certain parts of the tiger are useful as powerful charms. The whiskers, teeth and claws are prophylactics against the evil eye. [262] To eat his flesh, particularly his heart, gives one the disposition of a tiger. To see a dead tiger is bad luck as his spirit may later harm the person observing him. [777] If worshipped as Baghdeo[1] the tiger will not injure any one he meets in the forest nor molest the cattle. There is a story current among the Kols that in the distant past a tiger was born out of a Kol. [773] During the years that followed they lived together peacefully in the forest, but after a time the tiger began to trouble Kols so that a separation was deemed advisable and since that time they have lived apart.[2]

The serpent is both feared and reverenced by Kols. It is usually the cobra which is adored, although Kols treat all serpents with respect. However, it is considered no great sin to slay a cobra, but it must not be done unless the cobra is stubborn and shows fight, particularly when in the house. If a cobra, or any other snake is found in a dwelling house it is addressed respectfully as *maharaj* and asked politely to leave. It may be helped out with a little judicious poking with a stick. If it goes out readily it is helped on its way and if all goes well is not molested further. If, however, the *nag* shows fight and does not appear willing to leave the house or courtyard it may be beaten and killed and its body burned. [782] An offering should be made to its spirit after such an occasion. At the time of the festival of Nagpanchami[3] milk is set out for snakes, a common practice all over Central India. [796]

The horse is an animal with which Rautiya Kols do not have much to do; as a rule they will not touch one, and its dung is absolutely taboo. [23] [237] Some of their traditions concerning horses are recorded on previous pages.[4]

The sacrificial animals are the chicken, goat, pig and sheep. [782]

We could not find out much concerning the Kol idea of birds.

1 See pages 141-142.
2 See pages 41-42.
3 See pages 171-172.
4 See pages 34-35; also Chapter X.

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825 The *galgal* or *maina* (*Acridotheres tristis*) is believed to be engaged, but not yet married, and is called a *brahmacharia*. He is never injured. Parrots are never molested, for some of them can speak and utter [773] Ram! Ram! One legend, recorded in another place[1] has it that the *Sath Bhais* gave the Kols their gift of music.

824 *Trees.* Among the Kols trees are reverenced largely in connection with worship. The *nim* tree (*Melia azadirachta*) appears to [776] be the favourite tree of the Kol tribe. It is the home of Khermai, [778] the chief deity, and every Kol village or community has a *nim* tree under which the major shrine of the village is found. It has already been noted that this tree has certain magical protective powers and medicinal properties. Demons seldom, if ever, take up their dwelling [513] in a growing *nim* tree, and it is considered healthful and safe to sleep under one.

[778] The *pipal* tree (*Ficus religiosa*) and the banyan tree (*Ficus indica*) are also sacred to Kols and it is not infrequent that they put shrines under them. However, these trees are more liable to shelter 824 evil spirits than is the *nim*, and Barandeo is often found in them. We 776 were told about the growth of a certain *pipal* tree in one of the villages which we visited. It appears that Barandeo wanted to live on the veranda of that house so he saw to it that a *pipal* tree began to grow there. The leaves of this tree, however, were repeatedly eaten off by goats but still it grew. The people who lived there then realized that this must be the work of some deity and cared for it. As a result it grew and good luck came into the house. Kols will never destroy a young *pipal* tree even though they know that eventually it will destroy 824 the building. Hutton, in writing about the survival of primitive 171 belief, says the following in connection with the *pipal* tree:

> We may therefore continue to expect to find very ancient and primitive beliefs continuing under the guise of Hinduism. The sanctity of the fig tree, for instance is possibly to be associated with the beliefs of the Negrito inhabitants who appear to have formed the earliest population of India. It is possibly on account of its milk-like sap that the *ficus* is associated with the fertility cults in Africa, Italy and New Guinea as well as in Assam and in South India, and it is generally also connected with the spirits of the dead. This cult appears to be shared by the Andamese who are an approximately pure Negrito race, and perhaps the only race still surviving in the world comparatively unmixed in blood. At any rate they and their beliefs have probably been isolated for some 5000 years at least.[2]

824 As far as Kols are concerned the mango tree (*Mangifera indica*) 776 and the *bel* tree (*Aegle marmelos*) are not commonly inhabited by either

1 See Chapter X.
2 *Census of India*, 1931, 1 : 1, p. 397.

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spirits or goddesses. It has been noted that the mango branch plays an important part in wedding functions. It was also noted that in building the wedding booth Kols ought to use, if possible, wood from the *saleh* tree (*Boswellia serrata*) both for the main supports of the *marhwa* and for the sacred pole, the *magrohan*. The consensus of opinion is that for the latter the *saleh* is absolutely indispensable.

The *tulasi* plant (*Ocymum sanctum*) is found beside Kol shrines and in the courtyards of their houses. It should be watered daily and its leaves are said to have certain medicinal qualities, being especially effective in fevers. Tulasi was once a woman who engaged in religious austerities for a long time and at last dared to ask to become a wife of Vishnu. For this presumption Tulasi was cursed by Lakshmi the wife of Vishnu, and was turned into this plant. Vishnu comforted her by promising to be near her in the form of a *salagrama* stone. So they are often associated in worship and even in Kol shrines a *salagrama* stone is usually found close to the *tulasi* plant. The leaf is highly scented and a bit is often broken off by Kols and eaten with their food. During the evening hours it is worshipped by having a small *dip* lighted before it.

Dead trees are generally feared as the death of a tree is most certainly due to an evil spirit's influence and a *churel* often kills a tree to make a residence for herself.

MARRIAGE OF TREES. The Kols have a ceremony for the marriage of trees. The mango tree is the one usually married and this should be done at the time it first begins to bear fruit. Unless such a tree has been married no adult should eat of the fruit, although a child may do so. There are at least two methods of marrying trees, both of which require the Brahmin priest. In the first instance a mango tree should be married to a tamarind tree (*Tamarindus indicus*). This tree may be near at hand, or even some distance from the mango tree. The ceremony appears to consist in having a married couple wind a cotton thread coloured with *haldi* seven times around the tree. They should move about the tree in a clockwise direction and as they do this the Brahmin recites sacred texts. First the mango tree is wound then the tamarind; if they are close enough together the thread may be stretched from one to the other. It is not unusual to find a mango and a tamarind tree planted close by. Many of the features of the regular wedding are incorporated, and following the function there is a feast.

In the second instance a small wooden peg, variously coloured, takes the place of the tamarind tree. This may be made out of tama-

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and fearful for at least twelve years. Usually such spirits are not dangerous, and some have said that after twelve years they go to Bhagawan or may be born into the world again. 762 775

Sometimes the woman may die in childbirth and the child be born alive. If so, it is thought very likely that the child owes its life to an evil spirit, who desires it for some evil purpose, and hence the child may really be a *bhut*. It is very difficult to get a wet nurse for such children and they usually do not survive very long. 845 776 775

We happened to be in a Kol village a few hours after an earthquake and we asked a group what caused the movement of the earth. Nearly all at once agreed that the earth shook because of *pap*, or sin. One or two though, began to think and said that the real reason was that the earth rested upon the heads of *Nag*—a many-headed serpent, and that once in twelve years he had to shift the earth from one head to another and that produced an earthquake. But when confronted with the obvious fact that an earthquake came oftener than once in twelve years they were puzzled and could not account for it. The latter explanation is the one frequently advanced among Hindus, but Kols were not very familiar with it. 823 [773] 177]

Rain, so intimately connected with the welfare of forest people, may often be brought to pass by magical processes, and there are frequent instances of this among the tribes and castes of Central Provinces. In many of these rites nudity is an essential part, for moved by pity at their representation of poverty, Indra or some rain *deota* will grant refreshing showers. No trace of nudity practices was found among the Kols. The more sophisticated Kol believes that rain is sent only by Indra, the Vedic god of rain, and that it is only through a Brahmin that the gift of rain may be secured. 821 [291] [177]

Some Kols use frogs in an attempt to bring the rains. Frogs and rains are intimately associated in their minds, for in the weeks that precede the coming of the monsoon, the frogs croak long and loudly, and it is thought that their calls bring the showers. So if the monsoon is delayed and there is a drouth, Kol boys will round up all the frogs they can. The larger they are the better for this purpose. A thread is tied round the leg of each frog and they are then dragged about the village. As they pass by houses the people living there come out and sprinkle a bit of water over them. The boys and their frogs finally end up at the village shrine and the latter are tied before the *devi*. It is said that the croaking of the frogs at the shrine will affect the *devi* resident there and she too will long for cooling showers, so she gets to work and uses her influence and power to help bring the rain to pass. 821 825 789

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CHAPTER X

FOLKLORE AND FABLES

538 It appears that on the whole the Kols of Central India are not particularly interested in fables and have but little folklore. The Kols pride themselves mostly on their music and song, and the stories which follow have not been easy to collect. No trace was found amongst them of bards or professional story-tellers. No doubt, however, there is much lore hidden away, but it is not obtained when it is directly asked for; the best account is usually found when the story incidentally comes up. Like most primitive people, the Kol knows more than he willingly reveals. The following stories were collected from Kols and represent stories current today.

539 773 THE ORIGIN OF THE EARTH. Brahma is the creator in the Hindu Triad; associated with him are Siva, the destroyer, and Vishnu, the preserver. Certain Kols indicated that it was Brahma whom they considered as the Creator of this world. In the beginning, everything was water, and there was not a bit of dry land anywhere. Brahma brought the earth into existence as follows. First he took the form of a fish and explored the depths of the primeval ocean. But a fish is handicapped in that it cannot carry anything. So Brahma became a tortoise and from some place beneath the primeval ocean, which he had explored as a fish, the Kols know not whence, Brahma got some mud which he put on his back and brought to the surface. It was from this mud that the earth was shaped.

This story bears a resemblance to the story of the Incarnations of Vishnu. The fish and the tortoise are the first and second respectively of the ten chief *avataras* of Vishnu. But the content is quite different, especially in the case of the fish.

[825] THE ORIGIN OF INSECTS. Kols account for the presence of "insects" such as "snakes, scorpions and wasps" in the following way: Sankara was the greatest of all ascetics. He lived very simply without clothes and covered his body with ashes. The dirt from his body, when it fell to the earth, became alive, and so insects such as those named above came into being.

THE ORIGIN OF PEOPLE. The Kol story does not make clear how the first people came into existence, for they begin with a primitive

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couple. The man was named Baiju, which, they say, is the same as Bhil, and the woman was Shivari. These are the parents of all living races. The generation that came of this union is called Bhil, "because Baiju means Bhil." In the beginning, then, all were Bhils. This family has now separated into many races, and the present condition may be likened to a tree with one root, yet having many branches and leaves. These different branches were the result of the deeds and beliefs of individuals. For example, in the course of time among the Kols a certain *kurki* began to keep pigs, and other Kols, such as Rautiyas would have nothing to do with such people. They are a different branch. Such events made distinctions within the Kol tribe. Other differences arose, and now the Kols are split up into many divisions, yet like the tree are all one. Baiju, it is believed, still lives as a god in a place in Rewa State called Baijnath. In his shrine a very large image of Shivari is also found. She is pictured as black and fat with a large gold ring in her nose. Of course Baiju's image is in this temple, and his brother Baijnath, but they are not together. There are also images to Bhagawanji and Mahadeoji. Many castes go there to worship, but they have respect only for the image of Bhagawanji and Mahadeoji, and not for Shivari and Baiju. Only the Kols know their worth and serve them.

This story illustrates the way Kols mix things together and also the distinction made by caste people between their gods and those of the Kols.

The name of Shivari often appears in connection with stories of the origin of the Kols. Previous note was made of this in connection with stories of origin.[1] Shivari is usually called the mother of all Kols and is linked to the story of Savari in the Ramayana, although it will be noted that the content is quite different. Once, when Rama, Lakshman, and Sita were on their way into the forest on their voluntary exile, it was discovered that they were in need of help. Savari also lived in the forest, and at once began to serve Rama. Savari, the Kols say, was particularly fond of a jungle plum called *Ber* (*Zizyphus jujuba*).[2] She knew that others would like them too, and she used to gather them and offer them to Rama and Lakshman. One day, however, she forgot what she was doing, and that the plums were not for herself, and as she picked them, she took a bite from each and dropped them into her basket. When she arrived at the *ashram* after this trip, she suddenly met Rama, who eagerly asked her for some

1 Also called Shoori. See pages 6, 9, 10, 42, 104, 140.
2 The *ber* is associated with the jungle and enters frequently into their stories. The Hindi word *Kol* is also used for the same fruit—the *Zizyphus jujuba*.

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539 773 plums. She looked into her basket and saw the half-eaten plums, but was ashamed to tell him that she had forgotten him and had thought only of herself. So she did not offer the basket to Rama. Ramaji, however, was very persistent, and finally she had to present to him the basket filled with half-eaten *bers*. Rama asked Lakshman if he would eat some, but when he saw that they were already touched, he refused to do so. Rama, however, thought them fit to eat, and both he and Sita partook of them. He did not mind it as Lakshman seemed to do. Later on when Lakshman had been struck down by an arrow, he was revived only when he ate these plums. So he should have eaten them in the first place. Thus she served them faithfully for the period of their exile, and when they were preparing to leave the forest, Shivari asked for a boon. She asked for two things: First, for many descendants and secondly, for at least two pounds of grain daily for each, so that they might never starve, and clothes to cover the body. These boons were immediately granted, and so the Kols multiplied. There are today thousands of Kols, they relate, who are all clothed and fed due to the mercy of Bhagawan in the form of Rama.

The basis for the Kol stories related here and also at an earlier place, appears to be found in Valmiki's Ramayana Book III, Canto LXXV. The accounts nevertheless are very different and indicate the way a story is taken hold of and made quite different as it passes orally in legend and story. In the Ramayana Sita does not appear at all, as she has already been stolen away by the wicked demon King of Ceylon, Rawana, and Rama and his brother Lakshman were in search of her. In their journeyings they came to the edge of a great lake called Pampa where they found in a hermitage an aged female ascetic of whom they had heard before, named Savari. When they arrived, she reverently embraced the feet of the two brothers and confessed that it had been her life-long desire to get a vision of them. To her Rama was the greatest of heavenly beings, and now that she had seen him, she knew she could depart in peace to paradise. She had already been told of his expected coming to the hermitage, and in preparation for his visit, had collected the world-famous fruits of the hermitage for his comfort and sustenance. Rama requested the aged woman to show them the hermitage which was built up by the famous Matanga—a low-caste Chandala who had, by means of great austerities and asceticism, attempted to procure for himself the rank and status of a Brahmin. His works were great and would have to be rewarded, but to become a Brahmin was not possible in this world-order, and the gods tried to persuade him that his attempt was

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irrational. But he kept on and as he could not be made a Brahmin, he was eventually made a god. Long before the coming of Rama, Matanga had ascended into the heavens, and yet the flowers with which he had bedecked the altars had not withered nor decayed. Savari showed the friends all the wonders of the hermitage. After Rama had seen all, Savari told him that she was anxious to depart this world and join the ascetics above, whom she had served so long. So in the presence of Rama and Lakshman she entered into a fire and ascended into the sky, adorned, it is said, not in the ascetic garb of bark, deer skin and matted hair, but with glorious apparel garlanded for heaven. The whole sky was lighted by this splendour, and as a result of her life of simplicity and piety, she gained her reward above.

It will be noted that this story says nothing about boons nor descendants.

THE SPREAD OF MANKIND. The story runs that in the beginning Bhagawan created all men equal. There was neither high nor low, rich nor poor; all were contented and had the supply of every need. In the course of time Bhagawan conceived the plan of building a great fort called Bandhan to be located in Rewa. Many labourers were needed for this task, so Bhagawan sent Lakshman to find them. He went everywhere seeking workers but could find no one willing to do this hard work, for no one was in need of work. Moreover they said that they themselves would gladly employ labourers in their own projects if Bhagawan would only supply them. Thus it appeared to Lakshman that the people would not only do no work, but would also employ any labourers who were brought in; so, much disappointed, he returned to Bhagawan. Bhagawan too was disappointed, and began to think of what he should do. At last he conceived the idea of making all the people poor, for then, he reasoned, they should be glad to work. This he did, and after a time, when the people had experienced the pangs of poverty and want, he again sent Lakshman. Now this time he found that all were eager for employment and a daily wage. They were put to work and the fort was built as first planned. When the work was finished, Bhagawan had no further plan for them, and there were no wages forthcoming. Men were still poor, and in order to get work so that they might live, men began to move out over the face of the earth. They spread thus from Rewa everywhere, and the earth became peopled.

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539 773 THE ORIGIN OF KOLS. There are several stories recorded elsewhere[1] concerning the origin of the Kols. This story may supplement them. While Rama was in exile in the forest, many of the gods took compassion on him and descended to the earth in human form in order to assist him. These gods called themselves Kolas. After the fourteen-year period of exile was over, Rama returned to his Kingdom and became King of Ayodhya. The Kolas went back to heaven—Indrapuri. The Kols of today are the descendants of the gods who were in the forest along with Rama. This proves the divine origin and nature of the Kols.

HOW THE KOLS LOST THEIR RIGHTS. From the beginning, the Kols enjoyed many rights, and in their prestige were second to none. Once Shivari was going on a journey. A man was hired to carry her [482] luggage in a *kanwar*—two baskets attached to the ends of a bamboo pole slung over the shoulder. Thus they started off. After they had gone some distance, the man said to Shivari: "Why do you walk, when there in the field is a horse for you to ride upon?" This gave Shivari an idea. The horse was brought, but she could not get on it, and so she took an axe and began to chop at the horse's legs to shorten them. The man shouted: "What are you doing?" She replied: "I wish to prepare two pegs out of the horse's legs so that I may use them to mount the horse as he is too high for me." The man said: "Fool, you know nothing; you are spoiling the horse. Take this *kanwar* and I will show you how to ride a horse." So he gave to her the *kanwar* with her luggage within the baskets and jumping on the horse, he rode away. From that day on Shivari had to carry her own luggage everywhere, and her descendants became coolies. The man was really Bhagawan in the form of Ramachandraji, and took away from her the high privileges which were really hers, because she was so stupid. Thus Bhagawan deceived the Kols and cheated them of their rights, and ever since that time they have been burden bearers and coolies.

492 539 773 There are various stories about the horse and the dispossession of the Kols by others. A Brahmin was once ploughing a field, and a Kol happened to pass that way on horseback. The Kol was much interested as he had never witnessed ploughing before. He descended from his horse and after watching the process a while, wondered if he could also do it. To test himself he caught hold of the plough and attempted to use it. The Brahmin then jumped on the horse and rode away and was never seen again. So the Kol had to continue to plough the field and

1 See pages 4-10, 36, 37, 38, 39-40, 41-42.

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has been ploughing ever since. It was really Bhagawan in the form of a Brahmin that deceived the foolish Kol, and Kols have never ridden horseback since that time.

DEPRIVED OF BREAD. In olden days Kols had plenty to eat, but they did not know how to eat their food properly. Instead of breaking their *chapatis* with their hands, they used axes upon them. This displeased Bhagawan, and he sent poverty amongst them, and Kols nowadays get their daily bread only after very hard labour.

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There is another tradition linking the horse and bread together. The story goes as before that, when the Kols were first upon the earth, they had plenty to satisfy all their needs. They had horses to ride upon, plenty of wheat and *ghi* and fruits. They lived happily, acquired much wealth, and became the most powerful people in all the regions about. But they could not ride upon horses properly. They conceived the plan of shortening their horses' legs with axes, so that they would not have so much difficulty in mounting and would also not have to fall so far. They also began to chop up their *chapatis* with axes. When Bhagawan came to know of all this, he was very angry and took away the axes and all the horses. He gave the Kols sickles and commanded that thereafter they should never ride a horse and that they should work as labourers in reaping the harvests of others.

THE LOSS OF THE SACRED THREAD. In the beginning, the Kols were the highest of all peoples and wore the sacred thread, which is today the right of the twice-born castes only. But once for some reason, Bhagawan called the people together and put the Kols last, thus angering them greatly for they felt humiliated in the presence of all. In their anger and to show their disregard for the sacred thread, they tore them off and scattered them in all directions. These became attached to trees and bushes and at once began to grow and became *Amarbel* (*Cuscuta reflexa*), a greenish yellow parasitic plant now found in many parts of Central India. Any bit of it will attach itself to a tree or bush and grow easily. "Now," say the Kols, "we would challenge any Brahmin to do the same. Let them throw away their sacred threads. There was life in ours but theirs are dead."

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HOW THE KOLS BECAME SEVEN FAMILIES. At first there was but one family of Kols, the descendants of Shivari. This family besought the favour of Bhagawan in prayers which were unselfish and which asked not for wealth or food. Bhagawan therefore blessed

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539 773 564 them and their number increased so greatly, above all other families on earth, so that there was no room for them to live together. So Bhagawan gave them permission to separate into seven groups, and thus the seven *kurhis* of the Kols arose. The groups named in this story are: (1) Thakuriya, (2) Mawasi, (3) Binjhwar, (4) Khairwar, (5) Khangar, (6) Pawai and (7) Kurha.

539 773 HOW THE KOLS CAME TO BE POPULAR. Sehai and Kuhai were two sisters who were very rich but lacked things to eat, being thus forced to gather the fruits of the forest in which they lived. One day Rama and Lakshman passed by their house. They were hungry and sought food from the sisters. The sisters had nothing but fruits to offer them, and Rama received these gladly, but Lakshman threw them away in anger. The brothers then departed on their quest, but not without the curse of the sisters upon Lakshman for his rudeness. In the course of a battle, while attempting to rescue Sita, Lakshman, was struck by an arrow and fell unconscious and no one was able to restore him. Then Rama remembered the curses of the sisters and sent a messenger to bring some of the rejected fruit. This was brought and forced into his mouth; as it touched his lips, he at once became well and regained the full use of his senses. Then Sehai (really Shivari) asked for a boon and Rama replied: "I am very much pleased with you; go and flourish in the world and increase the population of the world with many children." From that time the Kols have had large families and are found in every part of India. This is not unlike a story recorded earlier.[1]

HEROES AMONG THE KOLS. Apart from the Kol woman Shivari, the Kols do not seem to have heroes or heroines in their legends. It is said that there is not even one hero among the Kols and the following story explains why that is and also explains the origin of their musical abilities.

Once Bhagawan called people together out of every community in order to bless them and give them a boon. Groups from everywhere set off to the place of *darshana* and among them were the Kols. Other groups reached the place where the boons were to be granted, but the Kols never arrived. It so happened that as they were proceeding on their way, the Kols heard the cry of the birds known as the *Sath Bhai* or Seven Sisters (*Crateropus canorus*). (The sarcasm of the story is to be found in the fact that these birds have a very unmusical cry, one which grates upon the ear). Hearing the cry *pay, pay, pay*

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1 See pages 8-10.

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of the *Sath Bhai*, and thinking this to be their boon, the Kols returned home. They took it that Bhagawan had given them the gift of musical expression, and from that time they became adept at the beating of drums and singing, for which they are famous all over India.

THE DOMESTICATION OF ANIMALS. After the creation of the earth Bhagawan peopled it with all kinds of animals. But the problem was, which one of them should be put to the plough in order that the ground might be tilled? First he tried the elephant, but he was too big and could not turn about in the field, and in addition he trampled down the ploughed earth. So he tried the camel next but it was not satisfactory either. Finally he created the oxen and tried them in the plough; they were just right and with them Bhagawan succeeded in turning up the soil. Then Bhagawan gave the cattle a gentle and kind nature so that man might have them with him and use the oxen to till the land. Thus they were domesticated.

WHERE AGRICULTURE STARTED. In the beginning certain peoples were created by Bhagawan specifically for the purpose of farming. These were the Kurmis, Lodhis, Kols and Gonds. It was with these groups that agriculture first started. But there are others who maintain that all people were of the jungle and that Bhagawan gave to them first the cattle which he had created; therefore they left living off fruits and roots and began to grow crops.

WHY WE HAVE A LITTLE FINGER. There is a story among Kols, that in the distant past when the Pandus and the Kurus fought in Hindustan, Shahadeo Pandu desired to see for himself just how one might become possessed of Shardamai. So he thought he would try an experiment. He brought before the goddess a cocoanut, some *sendur*, *ghi* and fire, and began to make a *hom* offering. As he was doing this, he suddenly became possessed of the *devi* and his fourth finger happened to rest in the *hom* fire. Being in the state of unconsciousness due to the *bawa* he did not notice this fact, and the tip of the finger began slowly to burn away. Ever since, man has had a little finger for it was shortened in the *hom* fire.

THE COMING OF DISEASES. There were once seven sisters in heaven, who were sent from there to the earth to live among men. As they left Bhagawan, they asked him for boons, for, they said, unless they had power of some kind no one would respect them nor would men worship them. It happened that each was granted a boon.

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539 773 753 Khermai, called Bhagavati, chose the power of smallpox. If any one fails to please her, she appears in that person in the form of smallpox. Or, if not that, some other in the family will be with the pox, euphemistically called *mata*, "mother". She was given the power to remain in full control of the person for two and a half days, and during that time the sick person should be worshipped, for that really means the worshipping of Bhagavati; so men must respect and honour her for her power. Further honour must be shown by the whole family in the avoidance of certain foods such as pulses and *ghi*. No frying pan should be used, and the inmates of the house should not wear leather shoes.

539 773 782 THE KOLS AND MAHADEO (SIVA). The Kols have several stories in which they speak of a character which they call Baiju or Baijnath. One example has already been given. From some stories it appears that he is the husband of Shivari. Kols say that Baiju, under the name of Baijnath, and the god Mahadeo must always be worshipped together, but Baijnath should be worshipped first.

One story relates that Baijnath excelled all others in his devotion to Bhagawan, and when the time was right, he asked Bhagawan for a boon. He asked that at the time of worship, water might first be poured over him and then over Mahadeo. This was granted, and he used to worship Mahadeo and beat him with a stick five times a day.

A longer form of this story from another section of Central India is as follows: In this account Baijnath is spoken of as a Rautiya Kol, a farmer who worked daily in his fields. He had this peculiar characteristic, however, which was that as he went by a certain temple, he used to enter in and beat Mahadeo with a stick five times a day. The reason for this strange behaviour was known only to Baijnath. Once it happened that he was so busy in the fields that he forgot to beat the god and when he was almost home from work he recalled his omission. At once he decided to return to the dwelling place of Mahadeo, but on the way he found that, for some strange reason, the river was in spate, and would be very dangerous to cross. He decided to wait a bit, but there was no improvement in the river. The sun was about to set, and the day would be gone, so he decided to jump into the river and swim through it. He did this very dangerous thing and going to the temple gave Mahadeo five blows with the stick. On his return he had to swim the river again. Now Mahadeo, who saw all this, was afraid, for he realized that Baijnath was a man of purpose and would not be turned aside by dangers, so he decided that he must do something to please Baijnath. With this in mind Mahadeo waited

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till Baijnath arrived the next day intent on beating him. Greeting him he said :- "Baijnath, I wish to give you a great boon. It is that people will worship you and pour water on you first and after that they will worship me. If they should fail to do this to you, they will have no fruit of their labours at all. So now that you have this *bardan* please give me release from this daily beating you are giving me." Hearing this, Baijnath was very happy and Mahadeo was beaten no more. So Kols always worship Baijnath first.[1]

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HOW THE CAT BECAME A HOUSEHOLD PET. Once Mahadeo sent a cat to spy upon a certain home. He wanted to know whether there was a fire in there at that particular time. This cat had stayed with Mahadeo for a long time and, obeying his commands, she went to the house where she found the fire burning and milk nicely warmed beside it. There was also some freshly prepared butter on the floor. The cat tasted the butter and found it so delicious that she ate it all. Next she drank the milk, and feeling very comfortable, she curled up to sleep beside the cosy fire. She nevermore left the house, for she preferred it with its warmth, and butter and milk, to the treatment and food she had with Mahadeo. Since that time the cat has become a household animal, and it is a great sin to kill one, as it came directly from Mahadeo.

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WHY THE TIGER FEARS THE RED DOG. The wild dog, a red dog of India, (*Cyon dakhunensis*) is common in the wilder jungles of Central India. It is much feared by the animals of the forest, including the tiger, and tigers are sometimes killed by it. These dogs always hunt in packs containing often as many as thirty animals, and the pack does not give tongue, coming suddenly upon its prey.

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The story goes that once Mahadeo quarrelled with Parvati his wife. He was so annoyed with her that he left home and went into voluntary exile in the forest. Parvati was sorry and wanted to get him back, but was too proud to humble herself before him. Finally she decided to frighten him and thus cause him to return. She was sure that if she could send a tiger after him to annoy him Mahadeo would surely fly to his home for safety. So she used her divine powers to make a tiger go to him, but in vain, for Mahadeo outwitted her, as

1 It is now established that Siva or Mahadeo worship is very ancient. Evidences of this are found in the Mohenjodaro civilization. A Census report notes that "Bhils, Savaias and the Korkus all trace their origin to Mahadeva, though it is possible that the tradition may be a latterly acquired Hindu Idea." (1931—I : 3 B. p. 63). Perhaps this story is a memory of a strife with groups who did trace their ancestry back to Mahadeo. The Kols frequently identify Baiju or Baijnath with the Bhils.

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539 773 825 he was a god. He picked up some dry pieces of wood and threw them toward the tiger saying, *"Chhu, chhu"*. The wood became the wild dogs of the Indian jungles, which do not fear the tiger and attack it in packs. These dogs attacked the tiger and with their tails spread urine in his eyes. This made the tiger blind and fearful and he hastened away.

[776] Since that time Kols have held the tiger sacred because it is associated with the goddess Parvati; also the wild dog, because Mahadeo created it to protect himself. This also accounts for the fact that tigers today are afraid of the red dog. Neither the tiger, the jungle dog, nor any dog should be killed.

539 773 HOW ILL TEMPER BRINGS DISASTER, AND ITS CURE. Biran, a Kol, was the servant of a *raja* who possessed a very bad temper. This king constantly used bad language in the presence of everyone he met and annoyed Biran immensely. Once this *raja* gave a great feast to which many people were invited. Biran and his friend Dadul also came. After the food was taken, someone got something very bitter in his mouth, and was forced to spit it out on the costly rug, on which they were seated for their meal. This was seen by the *raja* who became very angry and used disgusting *gali*. Many people left, among them Biran and Dadul. The rainy season was about to come, but the rains were delayed. What was the matter? No one could tell, and week after week passed with no cooling drops. They did not know that it was all due to the ill temper of the *raja*.

The farmers felt that they must break up the ground so they might catch any rain that fell. Biran was ploughing along with others when his plough turned up a frog, and the frog cried out in his dismay. Bhagawan heard this, and thinking that the frog was very thirsty, sent rain upon the earth; the wickedness of the *raja* could no longer restrain its fall. But the *raja* was still angry and called for Biran and scolded him. Nevertheless his words had no more power to bring a curse upon the land.

"This story shows that magic can remove a curse," was the comment of the teller.